

Message Text

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R 182122Z FEB 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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NAIROBI PASS N. HOLLIS, AID/RDP

E.O. 11652:E.O.

TAGS: BEXP, BTIO, OCON, NI

SUBJECT: BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE

REF: A) LAGOS 1626; B) STATE 31016

1. WHILE AWAITING REPLIES TO REFTEL B. DEPARTMENT MET
WITH FORMER AMBASSADOR TO KENYA, ANTHONY MARSHALL, TO
DISCUSS BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL'S (BI) ROUND TABLE HELD IN
NAIROBI IN EARLY 1977. GIST OF MARSHALL'S REMARKS WERE
THAT BI DOES NOT REPRESENT US VIEWPOINT IN DEVELOPING
RAPPORT WITH HOST COUNTRY ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT MATTERS
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AS IT CONSIDERS ITSELF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
AND ITS REPRESENTATION AT ROUND TABLE MEETINGS INCLUDES
COMPETITORS OF US. MARSHALL SPOKE DISPARAGINGLY OF BI'S
PRE-CONFERENCE PLANNING STATING THAT IT RELIED ALMOST
EXCLUSIVELY ON EMBASSY TO LAY GROUNDWORK AND PREPARE
LOGISTICS. NO USG REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING AMERICAN
AMBASSADOR, WERE INVITED TO ROUND TABLE AND THERE WAS

LITTLE, IF ANY, BI FOLLOW-UP WITH HOST COUNTRY OFFICIALS. MARSHALL SAID THAT ROUND TABLE DEALT IN GENERALITIES WITH RESPECT TO TRADE AND INVESTMENT CLIMATE AND DID NOTHING TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES FOR POTENTIAL INVESTORS.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH DEPTOFF, BI OFFICIAL IN NEW YORK CONFIRMED FACT THAT NO USG REPRESENTATIVE IS INVITED TO ROUND TABLE. IN FACT, BI STRESSED EXACT OPPOSITE BY CLAIMING THAT USG OFFICIALS ARE SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED DUE TO BI'S PERCEPTION OF ITSELF AS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION. WHEN ASKED HOW IT INTENDS TO PURSUE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROPOSED LAGOS CONFERENCE, BI REPLIED THAT IT HAD LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE IN LAGOS THAT WOULD HANDLE ITS AFFAIRS.

3. USDOC AND OTHERS HAVE EXPRESSED MISGIVINGS OVER USG OFFICIAL INVOLVEMENT IN BI ACTIVITIES. BI IS A PROFIT MAKING ORGANIZATION CHARGING ITS SUBSCRIBERS DOLS 4,000 PER YEAR FOR ITS SERVICES. BI'S OBJECTIVES ARE TO SERVE ITS INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS AS AN INFORMATION GATHERING/CLEARING HOUSE.

4. WHILE BI ROUND TABLE PROPOSED FOR LAGOS HAS MERIT IN THAT IT WILL FURTHER EXPOSE FMG TO NUMEROUS CONCERNS OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY WITH RESPECT TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DOING BUSINESS WITH AND IN NIGERIA, DEPARTMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE IT APPROPRAITE FOR EMBASSY TO PROVIDE MORE THAN GENERAL TACIT SUPPORT FOR BI ROUND TABLE. RE PARA FOUR REFTEL A, DEPARTMENT DOES NOT APPROVE OF EMBASSY SENDING NOTE TO MEA EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED ROUND TABLE. NOR DOES DEPARTMENT BELIEVE THAT PROPOSED BI ROUND TABLE CAN FULLY REPLACE BILATERAL ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CONFERENCE THAT HAS BEEN DISCUSSED IN ONGOING BILATERAL TALKS. HOWEVER, TIMING AND CONTENT OF BILATERAL CONFERENCE WILL NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO AVOID OVER-SCHEDULING AND DUPLICATION OF EFFORT. VANCE

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